

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 01672

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO, BE

SUBJECT: STANDARDIZATION

1. DAVIGNOO, IN A PRESENTATION TO THE DCM CONFERENCE LAST WEEK AND IN A SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH ME, MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ON STANDARDIZATION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

2. DAVIGNON CONTENTS THAT MOVEMENT TOWARD STANDARDIZATION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT ON A NATO-WIDE BASIS DEPENDS ON PROGRESS TOWARDS A EUROPEAN ARMAMENTS INDUSTRY. UNTIL THE
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EURPEANS ARE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING MILITARY EQUIPMENT
THAT THE EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF NATO COULD STANDARDIZE ON

ANY NATO-WIDE STANDARDIZATION COULD BE ON ONLY AMERICAN EQUIPMENT, DAVIGNON REASONED. UNTIL EUROPEAN ARMAMENT PRODUCTION IS MUCH MORE ADVANCED AND EFFICIENT THAN IT IS NOW, MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRODUCED IN EUROPE IS LIKELY TO BE TECHNOLOGICALLY INFERIOR TO AND MORE COSTLY THAN AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT. AS THINGS STAND NOW, DAVIGNON SAID, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE US WILL AGREE TO ACQUIRE MUCH MILITARY HARDWARE OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN. AT PRESENT THE ABILITY OF EUROPEAN INDUSTRY EVEN TO CO-PRODUCE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AT AN ECONOMIC PRICE IS LIMITED -- AS IS NOW BEING DISCOVERED IN CONJUNCTION WITH NEGOTIATIONS WITH EUROPEAN FIRMS ON THE CO-PRODUCTION OF PARTS OF THE F-16.

3. DAVIGNON CONSIDERES STANDARDIZATION PRIMARILY ON AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO BE POLITICALLY UNACCEPTABLE AND UNDESIRABLE. IF EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS WERE TO AGREE TO RELY MAINLY ON HARDWARE PRODUCED IN THE U.S. THERE WOULD BE A NUMBER OF ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES, DAVIGNON SAID. WITHOUT AN ADEQUATE EUROPEAN ARMAMENT INDUSTRY, EUROPEA WOULD NOT BE A VIABLE PARTNER FOR THE U.S. WHICH, IN THE LONG RUN, WOULD BE BAD FOR EUROPE, THE U.S., AND NATO. ALSO, DAVIGNON CONTENDED, WITHOUT A EUROPEAN ARMAMENT INDUSTRY SUPPORT IN EUROPE FOR ADEQUATE DEFENSE EXPENDITURES WILL DECREASE, ESPECIALLY AS THE COST OF SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT MOUNTS.

4. DAVIGNON CONSIDERS THAT COORDINATED EUROPEAN PRODUCTION OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT WOULD PUT EUROPE ON A MORE EQUAL FOOTING WITH THE U.S. AND COULD LEAD TO GENUINE NATO-WIDE STANDARDIZATION. IF THERE IS A LARGE PRODUCTION BASE IN EUROPE, DAVIGNON SAID THE QUALITY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRODUCED IN EUROPE WOULD INCREASE AND THE PRICE OF THIS EQUIPMENT WOULD DECREASE. THEN THERE WOULD BE A REASONABLE CHANCE THAT THE U.S. WOULD AGREE TO BUY (OR PRODUCE) EUROPEAN EQUIPMENT FOR AMERICAN ARMED FORCES. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WOULD BE LESS PAINFUL POLITICALLY FOR EUROPEAN COUNTRIES TO PURCHASE U.S. EQUIPMENT.

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5. DAVIGNON EXPECTS THAT THE U.S. WILL REMAIN UNWILLING TO BUY MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT PRODUCED IN EUROPE. HE ANTICIPATES THAT THE U.S. WILL INSIST ON MAINTAINING A CAPACITY TO PRODUCE ALL MAJOR ITEMS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FOR USE BY AMERICAN FORCES. IN DAVIGNON'S OPINION, ONCE THE EUROPEAN ARMAMENT INDUSTRY GETS ROLLING IT IS LIKELY THAT THE U.S. WILL ACQUIRE LICENSES TO PRODUCE EUROPEAN-DESIGNED EQUIPMENT IN THE U.S., BUT HE DOES NOT EXPECT THAT THE U.S. WILL RELY ON

EUROPEAN PRODUCTION FOR ANY MAJOR ITEMS. NOR DOES HE
THINK IT DESIRABLE THAT THE U.S. SHOULD DO SO.

6. WITH REGARD TO PROCEDURAL MATTERS, DAVIGNON
THINKS THAT STANDARDIZATION QUESTIONS SHOULD BE DEALT
WITH INITIALLY AMONG THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, PERHAPS
IN THE INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP, UNTIL THEY
HAVE SORTED THEMSELVES OUT AND HAVE MADE PROGRESS
TOWARD EUROPEAN-WIDE PRODUCTION. THEN, IN DAVIGNON'S
OPINION, STANDARDIZATION MATTERS COULD BE DEALT WITH
RPROFITABLY IN NATO. RENNER

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